Cabinet Committee on Tax and Investment (CCTI) for making a budgetary provision of Rs. 300 crores towards export subsidy :

(b) what are the factors which the Ministry is attributing for growth of exports in the post-GATT Scenario; and

(c) whether the cheap labour available in the country is a major factor of competitive advantage to the Indian exporters ?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) No, Sir.

(b) In the post-GATT Scenario, sizeable increases in trade are expected to occur in the areas of clothing, agriculture, forestry and fishery products. Since India's existing and potential export competitiveness lies in these areas, it is expected that India would get its due share in the overall growth of exports in the post-GATT scenario.

(c) Labour is only one among a host of other factors which determine the competitive advantage of the Indian economy.

Amendments in laws following GATT Retification

769. SHRI CHIMANBHAI MEHTA :
SHRIMATI MIRA DAS :

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) the number of laws and amending laws to be enacted as a follow up of GATT ratification; and

(b) whether the above laws being framed have taken enough care about the farmers' interests and if so, how it would be done generally and in terms of acquiring new varieties of seeds by farmers at reasonable rates?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE) : (a) and (b) To safeguard our interests and meet our obligations, amendments at various stages are likely mainly to the Customs Tariff Act (in respect of Anti-Dumping and Countervailing provisions); the Copyright Act; the Trade and Merchandise Marks Act; the Patents Act; the Industrial Design Act; and laws to deal with restrictive trade practices. Fresh legislation would need to be considered in the areas of geographical indications, lay-out designs of integrated circuits, undisclosed information, plant variety protection and safeguards.

The legislation on plant variety protection is in the process of being drafted and it would address issues of farmers' interests.

Stagnation in Tea production

770. SHRI SARADA MOHANTY:
SHRI RAHASBIHARI BARIK:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons for the stagnancy in the production of tea in the country

(b) the tea producing areas where stagnancy has been mostly there;

(c) the reasons therefor; and

(d) the steps taken to remove the stagnation?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) to (d) Production of tea in the country has been increasing steadily. Between 1983 to 1993, there has been an increase of nearly 30% in overall production level in the country with all major tea growing regions showing a steady increase.